

# **President Trump's Muslim Ban Makes America Less Safe**

*On Friday, President Trump signed an executive order putting in place new vetting procedures for refugees and immigrants entering the United States without consulting our national security agencies or our allies around the world. While billed as a measure to strengthen the security of our nation, according to national security experts, this executive order will actually make our nation less safe:*

**Michael V. Hayden, former Director of the CIA:** “[The refugee ban] inarguably has made us less safe. It has taken draconian measures against a threat that was hyped. The byproduct is it **feeds the Islamic militant narrative and makes it harder for our allies to side with us.**” [Washington Post, [1/29/17](#)]

**Paul Pillar, former official with the CIA's Counterterrorism Center:** “It is **not targeted at where the threat is**, and the anti-Islam message that it sends is **more likely to make America less safe.**” [Washington Post, [1/29/17](#)]

*Over the weekend, some Republican lawmakers spoke out in opposition to the executive order, arguing that it will weaken ties with America's allies and put Americans in danger:*

**Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and John McCain (R-AZ):** “We fear this executive order will become a **self-inflicted wound in the fight against terrorism.** This executive order sends a signal, intended or not, that America does not want Muslims coming into our country. That is why we fear this executive order **may do more to help terrorist recruitment than improve our security.**” [New York Times, [1/29/17](#)]

**Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH):** “... We ought to all take a **deep breath and come up with something that makes sense for our national security** and again for this notion that America has always been a welcoming home for refugees and immigrants.” [New York Times, [1/29/17](#)]

**Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO):** “While I am supportive of strengthening our screening processes and securing our borders, **a blanket travel ban goes too far.**” [Denverite, [1/29/17](#)]

**Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN):** “... This broad and confusing order seems to ban legal, permanent residents with ‘green cards,’ ... while not explicitly a religious test, **it comes close to one which is inconsistent with our American character.**” [New York Times, [1/29/17](#)]

**Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ):** “Enhancing long term national security requires that we have a clear-eyed view of radical Islamic terrorism **without ascribing radical Islamic terrorist views to all Muslims.**” [[1/28/17](#)]

**Rep. Will Hurd (TX-23), former CIA officer:** “A **one-size-fits-all solution is not the way to solve one of the most complex National Security challenges** we face... The Executive Order banning visa adjudication from seven countries does not make us safer; rather it **decreases the security of our homeland and endangers the lives of thousands of American men and women in our military, diplomatic corps and intelligence services.**” [[1/29/17](#)]

**Rep. Barbara Comstock (VA-10):** “The President's Executive Order issued yesterday **went beyond the increased vetting actions** that Congress has supported on a bipartisan basis.” [[1/29/17](#)]

**Rep. Steve Stivers (OH-15):** “I believe the executive order risks violating our nation’s values and fails to differentiate mainstream Islamic partners from radical Islamic terrorists — setting back our fight against radical Islam.” [Denver Post, [1/29/17](#)]

**Gov. John Kasich (R-OH):** “We must strengthen our nation’s security through well-thought out and constructed plans. The latest executive order is neither... This order should be replaced with a more thoughtful approach consistent with our values.” [[1/29/17](#)]

*President Trump’s executive order bans refugees and immigrants from seven countries from entering the United States: Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Yet, no terrorist attacks in America have been perpetrated by a refugee or immigrant from any of these countries.*

*In addition, the screening process for refugees entering the United States is already extremely thorough, and can take up to two years to complete. While it’s always appropriate to discuss whether improvements to the system can be made, those discussions should be held with Congress. An overview of the current process:*

1. The process starts with U.N. **registration** and an interview;
2. The U.N. grants **refugee status**;
3. **Referral** for resettlement in the U.S: The refugee does not decide which country they will resettle in, they are referred to a country. Any refugee who is referred to the U.S. is then subject to U.S. screening;
4. **Interview** with the State Department;
5. Up to three background **checks**: The refugee’s name is checked against law enforcement and intelligence databases. In 2008, a third background check was introduced for Iraqis. Since then, the third background check is now conducted for all refugees ages 14 to 65.
6. Three **fingerprint screenings**: Fingerprints are screened multiple times throughout the process against FBI and DHS databases;
7. The **case is then reviewed** by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS);
8. Some refugee cases are subject to **additional scrutiny**, including all **Syrian applicants**.
9. **Extensive, in-person interview** with DHS officer;
10. DHS grants **approval**;
11. The refugee is **screened** for contagious diseases;
12. The refugee attends a **cultural orientation** class;
13. The refugee is matched with a U.S. **resettlement agency**;
14. There is a **multi-agency security check** before the refugee leaves for the U.S.: Due to a lag between the initial screening date and the date of departure, there is a final check before the refugee departs for the U.S.;
15. There is a final **security check** at the U.S. airport where the refugee lands.

*Democrats will continue to urge President Trump to rescind the executive order and urge Republicans to work with us – in consultation with our national security agencies – on rational policy that will keep Americans safe.*